

Of parenting

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Of parenting

by [Anuna](#)

Summary

Alina finds out how her husband handled yet another parenting situation.

Notes

Hi I am new here, I haven't been writing in like three years and now I've watched this show and boom, I wrote a thing. Since this is a complex universe and I am still getting to know it, please be gentle and patient with me. :)

Her husband is not where he's supposed to be.

When Alina arrives to the east salon, expecting Alexander with several military officials and state lords to discuss the next strategy, she doesn't find him. She does find Ivan, trying not to look impatient.

“What happened?” she asks.

“Merciful Sankta,” Ivan nods curtly. “There was a.... *situation* to handle,” he informs her.

“With the meeting?”

“At the Little School, Sankta,” he says.

Oh.

So it's Anya related.

“Well?”

“There seems to have been an accident in which the eldest dutchess was involved.”

If Anya was involved in an accident, that probably means Anya was the cause of said accident. Alina waits patiently as Ivan carefully chooses his words.

“After seeing a Healer, the General took his daughters to the lake,” Ivan carefully informs.
“For a picnic.”

“Is Fedyor with them?” Alina asks, although she suspects the answer.

“Yes,” Ivan says.

She thanks Ivan and dismisses him, allowing him to resume whatever was his plan in his afternoon off, before Aleksander assigned him with the duty of giving her this very important message. Alina could stop by the school but she chooses to proceed to the lake, knowing that Aleksander wants her to join him. Occasions like these have not been as usual as before, due to the complex situation at the West Ravka border for the past two months. Whatever happened, Alina suspects that Aleksander longed to be *just a father* to their daughters for a moment.

She has her horse readied and rides off, the familiar path greeting her. It's been a long time since she last visited the pond and the waterfall. She realizes how much she misses it all when she nears her destination – the little meadow, the trees providing enough shade, the calming hum of the healing waters.

The *laughter*.

She dismounts before the sound of her approach can break the moment – underneath the tall oak, lying on the ground is her husband, the General, the world's most dangerous Grisha, helpless against the tickling attack of their three daughters.

And there's a flower crown covering half of his face.

Fedyor is standing on the opposite side of the meadow, politely observing the waterfall and failing to hide an amused smile. The girls are too preoccupied with the play, so they don't notice her approach. Aleksander has probably sensed it, but he is indulging the girls, letting them tickle him, and softly retaliating the tickles.

“Fedyor,” Alina greets.

“*Moy Sankta*,” he bows his head just slightly.

“ I hear there was a situation?” Alina asks. Unlike Ivan, Fedyor is happy to provide details.

“The eldest duchess has gotten into a fight with another student.”

“Oh,” Alina says. How unsurprising. That child might look like Aleksander but Anya has her temper.

“As I understand, the other student broke her hairpin accidentally. The duchess then pushed the other girl to the ground. The other girl pushed back. There were scaped knees and palms,” he pauses. “As you were busy, one of the teachers sought out the General.”

“And?” Alina asks, imagining what Aleksander's reaction was.

“As much as I know, the Healers fixed wounded knees and hands. But duchess Anya seemed not in her best spirits when the General called me to accompany them for a picnic here,” he makes a strictly tactical pause in his telling. “There was much conversation about the importance of apologizing. Also... a Baia horse was mentioned.”

Alina nearly groans. They have agreed to wait until Anya's sixth birthday to bring her that horse. Taller than a pony, but significantly shorter than other palace horses, and usually tame and patient in nature. Excellent choice for Anya, except Aleksander is obviously indulging her yet again, not to mention setting an example to Lada and Karina, and generally spoiling the girls.

Which she understands, *Saints* she *does*, but she cannot let him do it often. They will grow to be impossible. They're stubborn as it is, and they have him wrapped around their tiny little fingers, but he really should not be so obvious about it.

(It's just affection, Alina.

Not every adequate behavior is due to be grandly rewarded, Sasha.

I just want them to be happy, he usually says and gives her this look that reminds her neither of them had a happy childhood.)

She just sighs and leaves Fedyor, walking towards her little family. In that moment Lada chooses to take a pitcher of water and pour its contents onto her father's head, causing a completely undignified, unmanly shriek out of him.

Aleksander sits up, half of his hair drenched and finds her laughing at him.

“You were asking for it,” Alina teases.

“Mama!” the girls shout and run to her.

She joins them on the blanket Aleksander has spread on the ground. She hears all about Annika and how she broke Anya's special butterfly hairpin. It wasn't on purpose, it was a child-play accident, that much Alina can gather, but ofr Anya it was hurtful and unfair.

“I started crying and she laughed at me,” Anya says. Her sisters are happily eating summer berries, sitting next to their father. Lada has claimed the flower crown back for herself, but there are now berries in Aleksander's hair. “I kicked her but papa told me that was wrong,” Anya recounts, kneeling on Alina's lap. “And then I had to go and apologize for pushing her. But I did not *want* to apologize.”

Saints. That child has Aleksander's face, along with his mean streak and Alina's temper. She is going to be a handful.

“I understand, my love. But you know we should not hurt others,” Alina says carefully. She needs to talk to the teacher, yes, and hear all about the accident from an unbiased witness of

the event. Anya presses her lips together.

“She wasn't careful and she stepped on my butterfly,” she says and her eyes start to water.

“My love,” Aleksander says softly. “You know we can remake the butterfly.”

Anya lowers her face and sighs. “I... was just.... so sad,” she says.

So sad, that it made her angry. That is familiar. Alina looks at Aleksander.

“Yes, *I know*,” he says. Alina looks at the absolute mess around him; his shirt his hair, his face (is that mud? It probably is) and knows that he did his best to remedy the situation. Teach his eldest daughter how to tame her emotions, take responsibility for her actions, and the soothe her little heart.

“Did Annika apologize?” Alina asks. Anya nods and buries her little face against her mother's chest. Alina hugs her tight, and they sit like that for awhile.

Later, the girls decide they really should chase Fedyor around the meadow, which is a task he gladly accepts each time. Alina gets to sit underneath the familiar tree, Aleksander's head against her shoulder. She already called for her sun to help his hair dry, helped him clean his face and accepted the rest of the berries which he brought.

“So, a horse?” she asks.

“Snitch,” Aleksander says with fake annoyance as he watches Fedyor pretend he tripped over his feet. The girls laugh.

“Because I wouldn't find out, right?”

Aleksander just huffs.

“I may have said she might get the horse if her behavior is as it should be,” he says.

“Bribery is such creative way of raising a child,” Alina teasingly says.

“It works?” He looks at her in a manner that makes her laugh.

“We need to further discuss this,” she kisses his temple. “And her temper.”

“Oh yes, we should,” Aleksander agrees. “She is so good. Until you hurt her. I wonder where that comes from.”

“Why are you looking at me?” Alina asks him and he grins.

“It's not like we're so different,” he tells her.

In that he is right, she thinks. Raising all these girls? It's going to be difficult enough. She decides to let the subject go and leans her face against his shiny hair.

“We're truly not,” she says.

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